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Report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Livingstone Sewanyana, prepared in accordance with Council resolution 36/4.

Summary

In the present report, the first by the present mandate holder, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order sets out his preliminary views and intended scope of work, highlighting the vision and priorities to be addressed within the framework of the mandate as set forth in Human Rights Council resolution 18/6 and subsequent resolutions on the subject, the latest of which is resolution 36/4.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order is submitted to the Human Rights Council in accordance with Council resolution 18/6 and subsequent resolutions 21/9, 25/15, 27/9, 30/29, 33/3 and 36/4 and is the first report of the current mandate holder since his appointment by the Council at its thirty-seventh session. The Independent Expert is requested to report regularly to the Council and to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 18/6 and paragraphs 11 and 12 of resolution 36/4.

2. The Independent Expert recalls that, in resolution 18/6 establishing the mandate, the Council broadly called for an international order in which people could enjoy the rights of international solidarity, development and self-determination; exercise effective sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources; freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; have equal opportunity to participate in regional and international decision-making; and have a shared responsibility to address threats to international peace and security. As noted by the previous mandate holder (A/HRC/21/45 and Corr.1), relevant to resolution 18/6 are General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) on the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, 2625 (XXV) on the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and 65/223 on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

3. The mandate calls for a holistic approach to the implementation of human rights, with due regard to the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and inalienability of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and thus enjoins all stakeholders, including States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to cooperate to realize the aspirations expressed in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. In the present report the Independent Expert presents his vision as the second holder of the mandate and outlines the approach he intends to take in giving full effect to the mandate with which he has been entrusted.

5. The report is inspired by the existing normative human rights framework that incorporates the purposes and principles of the Charter, the international human rights treaties and a plethora of human rights instruments, principles, declarations and resolutions, including those of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and regional mechanisms, that reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, dignity and the worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and in the duty of States, small and large, to create conditions to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, while maintaining international peace and security.

6. Building on the work of the first mandate holder, Alfred Maurice de Zayas, who, through his expert consultations and thematic studies guided the implementation of the mandate for the first six years, the Independent Expert would like to explore current obstacles to the realization of genuine democracy and equitable development, identify home-grown solutions and share lessons learned. He will propose innovative approaches to building viable partnerships between Governments, the private sector and civil society. The Independent Expert will further focus on a number of thematic priorities, expanded on below, insofar as they have an impact on a democratic and equitable international order. Moreover, there is space within the mandate to critically reflect on how recommendations arising from these thematic priorities intersect with the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The Independent Expert would like to participate actively in international forums and engage States as well as cooperate and engage with other special procedure mandate holders. He considers it absolutely necessary to coordinate his work with other United Nations mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and the human rights treaty bodies as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour

Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He would like to consult with regional bodies including the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of American States, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Moreover, the Independent Expert hopes to explore synergies with the private sector, civil society organizations and academia in all regions of the world.

8. The mandate holder considers "civic participation" to be a core value and a key element in the realization of a democratic and equitable international order. In the pursuit of the goals of the mandate, the Independent Expert will seek to examine current State practices and propose measures necessary for States to reduce the growing social and economic disparities that are a threat to world peace and sustainable development. The Independent Expert believes that a new world order is possible, one that is based on universal respect for human rights, social justice, rule of law and equitable development.

9. The activities under the mandate will include thematic studies on identified focus areas, consultations and dialogue at the national, regional and international levels with relevant stakeholders, including States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental bodies, regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and the academy. The Independent Expert will seek to participate actively in key international debates on democracy, elections, migration, donor financing and public-sector reform. In addition to participating in conferences and conducting thematic studies, he will carry out country visits and dialogue with Governments on measures necessary to uphold agreed standards on democracy and sustainable development, as well as identify obstacles — whether structural, systemic or otherwise — to the realization of equitable development. The Independent Expert will, where appropriate, provide advice, carry out advocacy and raise concerns through the established working methods of the special procedures, including issuing communications and public statements, jointly with other mandate holders when relevant, paying special attention to gender and disability perspectives. He will engage with States to ensure that they uphold their human rights obligations and propose measures that promote active citizenship and enhance economic progress and equity, taking into account the political, economic and social realities among individual Member States.

10. In the present report the Independent Expert first provides a scope for the mandate. He then outlines a number of thematic priorities that he would like to study and report on during his tenure. In the final section he spells out the methodological approach that he will deploy in carrying out his mandate.

II. Mandate

11. According to paragraph 14 of resolution 18/6, the Independent Expert is mandated:

(a) To identify possible obstacles to the promotion and protection of a democratic and equitable international order, and to submit proposals and/or recommendations to the Human Rights Council on possible actions in that regard;

(b) To identify best practices in the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order at the local, national, regional and international levels;

(c) To raise awareness concerning the importance of promoting and protecting a democratic and equitable international order;

(d) To work in cooperation with States in order to foster the adoption of measures at the local, national, regional and international levels aimed at the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;

(e) To work in close coordination, while avoiding unnecessary duplication, with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, other special procedures of the Human Rights Council, international financial institutions, as well as with other relevant actors representing the broadest range of interests and experiences, within their respective mandates, including by attending and following up on relevant international conferences and events;

(f) To integrate a gender perspective and disabilities perspective into his or her work;

(g) To report regularly to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly in accordance with their respective programmes of work;

(h) To support the strengthening and promotion of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world.

12. The mandate calls for the identification of obstacles and best practices and the formulation of proposals and recommendations on possible action. Whereas there exists a rich normative framework for the realization of a democratic and equitable international order, the challenge lies with current practice. There is a disconnect between the theory and the practice. The mandate holder will interrogate current practice to identify gaps and showcase existing models where promising outcomes have been achieved. Through consultations, studies and cooperation with other mandate holders, the Independent Expert will seek to broaden public understanding of the mandate at all levels.

III. Thematic priorities

13. The Independent Expert proposes to address a number of thematic priorities over the course of his tenure, namely: (a) forms and practice of democracy; (b) public participation and decision-making in multilateral institutions; (c) corruption and open government; (d) the emergence of global governance forums; (e) global economic challenges; and (f) youth facing fragility and violence as well as opportunity. While these themes reflect key areas of interest to the mandate holder, they are not exhaustive and adjustments could be made following further comments and suggestions. The Independent Expert seeks views on these issues as well as reflections on obstacles and good practices related to the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order. He would welcome submissions of information on these themes, as well as practical examples of their impact on human rights, at the email address ie-internationalorder@ohchr.org.

A. Forms and practice of democracy

14. The mandate holder is aware that, although the notion of "democracy" has been a subject of intense debate for centuries, and despite the fact that democracy is considered a "universal value", it is far from being realized globally.[1] The world remains in a state of flux and is witnessing the retreat of democracy through the rise of populist political parties and the creeping tyranny of authoritarian leaders. As his predecessor has rightly observed, democracy remains a much-contested notion to which States attribute varying content. The focus of future work in this area will be less on the theoretical construct but more on the practice of democracy at the national level. What explains the resurgence of the different variants of populism and nationalism in various parts of the world? What is the relationship between this resurgence and conflict? Can it be attributed to the lack of democracy or the distorted application of the norm? Can it also be attributed to the outright failure by democratic models of governance to deliver the desired social and economic transformation demanded by the electorate(s)? We need to interrogate the existing practices across the world and identify obstacles to the growth of democracy and equitable development. Are the core values of democracy — participation, inclusion, equity, reciprocity, dialogue and compromise, fair competition and respect for rights — being compromised? What explains the emergence of so-called models: meritocracy, militarized democracy and dictatorship disguised as democracy? To what extent have ethnicity, struggle for resources, denial of rights, militarism, the rise of religious and cultural fundamentalism and overemphasis on national sovereignty contributed to growing inequalities, insecurity and social injustice within nations?

[1] Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a universal value", *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 10, No. 3 (July 1999).

15. The mandate holder acknowledges Human Rights Council resolution 19/36, in which the Council related democracy to human rights and the rule of law, and is mindful of the fact that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and that democracy does not belong exclusively to any country or region.[2] In addition, he stresses the necessity for due respect for sovereignty and the right to self-determination. However, there is a need to undertake a deep look at existing mechanisms and structures to determine how democracy has been promoted, undermined or modified based on ethnic, political or economic considerations and to make recommendations on how democracy can be rethought and customized to build resilience and yield stability. Moreover, the Independent Expert is mindful of the gap between the normative human rights framework providing that women have a right to participate in national and international political systems[3] and the reality of their persistent exclusion from public affairs.[4] Thus, his evaluation of ways to strengthen democratic processes will necessarily examine how these systems are inclusive of, and responsive to, women constituents, as well as those of other marginalized groups.

16. Democracy thrives when citizens exercise their right to choose their leaders in an atmosphere free from violence, coercion, duress or manipulation. The Independent Expert is aware that flawed elections in many parts of the world have resulted in conflict, internal displacement, arbitrary deprivation of life and, too often, economic disruption. Elections should not be mere rituals exercised periodically but should be genuine and reflect the free expression and will of the people (see A/HRC/24/38, paras. 15 and 19). Free and fair elections cannot be held without respect for the rule of law and independent institutions such as an independent election management body, an independent judiciary and a free press. The independent institutions must also be held accountable for the use of their power, more so when they succumb to political pressures, adopt a partisan stance and use their power and influence to subvert the will of the people.

17. The mandate holder is aware of General Assembly resolution 50/172, in which the Assembly recognized that there is no single political system or universal model for electoral processes equally suited to all nations and their peoples, and that political systems and electoral processes are subject to historical, political, cultural and religious factors; however, too often flawed elections are a threat to a democratic and equitable international order. The mandate holder would like to engage States on current obstacles to free, fair and inclusive elections and, where appropriate, identify best practices. He will seek views and expert opinions on electoral systems and procedures and their impact on human rights. Areas of interest include appointment procedures for election management bodies, accreditation of observers, recruitment of polling officials, conduct of elections, transmission and declaration of results, media access, the right to organize and assemble, adherence to electoral laws, handling of election disputes and implementation of recommendations of election observer reports.

B. Public participation and decision-making in multilateral institutions

18. The right to take part in the conduct of public affairs is essential to the realization of an international order that is democratic and equitable. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognize the right and opportunity of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The right to

[2] See paragraph 135 of General Assembly resolution 60/1.

[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 12; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 3 and 25; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, arts. 3 and 7–8; and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in public life. See also Sustainable Development Goals target 5.5, seeking to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

[4] See, for example, the report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice (A/HRC/23/50) focused on women's participation in political and public life.

participate in decision-making is not restricted to local affairs but extends to global institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF and WTO, where the right to be heard should be upheld. The mandate holder is aware that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has noted that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are as much a part of the United Nations brand as peacekeeping and development assistance and that people are demanding respect of the rule of law, including full participation in decisions that affected their lives.[5] The mandate holder is also aware that there is a significant body of world opinion that contends that citizens should participate beyond national boundaries as major public decisions are increasingly being taken beyond the nation State.

19. In this respect, the Independent Expert intends to examine how the right to participate in public affairs could be better realized in multilateral forums, such as through exploration of how the Human Rights Committee's general comment No. 25 (1996) on participation in public affairs and the right to vote and the draft guidelines on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs which the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare for presentation to the Council at its thirty-ninth session[6] could be applied to multilateral spheres. At present, for example, the General Assembly is composed of government representatives, with limited space for civil society. In addition, despite provisions in articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recognizing the right of women to participate not only in public and political life on a national level but also in representative capacities at the international level, the highest-ever percentages of women representatives to the Security Council and the General Assembly were about 27 and 19 per cent, respectively, in 2016.[7] Further, given the impact of international decision-making on a broad cross-section of populations, the previous mandate holder has expressed support for global public opinion polling on such matters as peace, the environment and the common heritage of mankind. He has also expressed support for the inclusion of citizens in the global decision-making body through the establishment of a United Nations parliamentary assembly. The Independent Expert would like to engage stakeholders on the progress and viability of creating such mechanisms whereby the perspectives of civil society, and those of other alternative voices, can be taken into account in the global decision-making structures.

20. Whereas multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions have shaped the international economic system, more needs to be done to make them more responsive and inclusive; this is critical to enable these agencies to address current global challenges. The Independent Expert is aware of efforts by the World Bank and IMF to engage with civil society to achieve legitimacy and increase development effectiveness.[8] As global institutions, they have an obligation to make decisions in accordance with such basic principles of democratic governance as transparency, inclusivity, responsiveness and accountability. Participation in decision-making requires that all stakeholders have the opportunity to influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect their lives.

21. The Independent Expert would like to build on previous work in these areas and engage stakeholders on the progress made in promoting inclusive multilateral institutions, with a consequent look at how that has affected a democratic and equitable international order.

[5] Speech by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its second regular session of 2011.

[6] See Human Rights Council resolution 33/22.

[7] UN News, "Feature: A conversation with female ambassadors about the UN Security Council", 17 March 2016.

[8] Victoria Kwakwa, "Multilateralism for an inclusive world", World Bank, 1 November 2017.

C. Corruption and open government

22. The Independent Expert is alive to the adverse effects of corruption on the realization of a democratic and equitable international order and appreciates the substantial work carried out in this area. The adoption of Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework, which aim to prevent adverse human rights impacts of corporate activity, represents significant progress in this respect. However, as the previous mandate holder has observed (see A/HRC/37/63, paras. 59–62), the lack of an enforcement mechanism undermines the Principles' effectiveness. There is a compelling need to adopt a legally binding convention on corporate social responsibility, and to impose civil and penal liability on transnational corporations, as a way of protecting rights holders from violations enabled by corrupt Governments, investors and speculators. Beyond treaty making, the mandate holder would like to engage States and other stakeholders on good practices that demonstrate effective private-public partnership, the enforcement of labour rights and environmental protection, as well as businesses' commitment to non-discrimination and other rights-respecting practices.

23. The rights to freedom of opinion and expression (article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), as well as those of peaceful assembly and association (article 20 of the Universal Declaration and articles 21 and 22 of the Covenant), are a cornerstone of the realization of a democratic and equitable international order. Without an enabling environment, citizens cannot freely participate and demand accountable and responsive governance. Under the principle of "open government", countries pledge to protect civil society organizations as a means of becoming more transparent, more accountable and more responsive to their own citizens.[9] Open government requires openness to civic participation and engagement in policymaking and governance, including through the protection of civil liberties. Under the concept of open government, States should promote freedom of association by taking measures to remove barriers to registration and access to international resources, tax benefits and individual and corporate donations, as well as promote civil society organization-government reform (see A/68/299, para. 43).

24. Recognizing the dangers faced by anti-corruption campaigners as well as other human rights defenders working in the field of good governance, it would also be important to analyse the connection between repression of civic activity and increased inequity. In this regard, the Independent Expert is interested in gathering information about citizen monitoring and the space given to civil society to participate and contribute to the work of national and international anti-corruption bodies.

25. Moreover, the Independent Expert envisions further reflections on measures for promoting accountability for corruption. In addition to exploring the role of national and international courts, he plans to dialogue with stakeholders about the international cooperation that exists — and that could be further developed — to tackle the transnational element of corruption, whether through training and the sharing of good practices, in the provision of mutual legal assistance or by cooperation in the area of stolen asset recovery.

D. Emergence of global governance forums

26. In an increasingly interconnected world, it is not only within international organizations that decisions are taken on a multilateral basis. As noted by the previous mandate holder (see A/HRC/37/63, para. 9), new global spaces besides the United Nations have emerged where international priorities are set. These intergovernmental, multisectoral and private groupings, such as the Group of Seven (G7), the Group of 20 (G20), the Group of 77 (G77), the World Economic Forum, the Bilderberg Group, the Trilateral Commission, the World Social Forum and the Community of Democracies, play a role in developing the framework and function of the international order. Their meetings and policies invite

[9] See the Open Government Declaration adopted by the Open Government Partnership in 2011.

intense public scrutiny and even protests, demonstrating the scope of their influence on global governance and the unique positions they occupy as convenors of the world's leaders and global thinkers. Moreover, these groupings will have added importance in the coming years given the increasingly cross-border nature of the world's political and economic challenges.

27. As such, it would be worthwhile to study their constitutions and practices, applying the principles of transparency, participation and accountability in order to develop recommendations on strengthening their democratic governance and human rights impact. How can global governance forums become more accessible and responsive to the voices of people and groups previously excluded from international decision-making bodies but whose lives and livelihoods are affected by the decisions taken? To what extent has women's participation been encouraged and realized in practice? What role should global governance forums play in sensitizing not only national Governments but also business, civic and local leaders on the centrality of human rights? Are there lessons to be drawn in terms of promoting a shared responsibility for managing global challenges?

28. The Independent Expert would like to encourage stakeholders' contributions on this topic and, by doing so, draw lessons for the further strengthening of the global system.

E. Global economic challenges

29. The Independent Expert recognizes that the regularly evolving global economic system poses challenges for the protection of human rights. Rapid technological advancement and changing consumer preferences have disrupted traditional labour markets. Economic crises have threatened progress in terms of sustainable development, triggered sharp reductions in social spending and precipitated drawbacks with respect to international cooperative commitments. In many countries, unemployment persists and wages have stagnated, adding to already present social and economic inequalities. Bleak economic outlooks have contributed to record numbers of migrants worldwide. In addition, the unregulated activities of corporations have had collateral effects on standards of living and the right to a healthy environment both within and outside national borders. Meanwhile, political uncertainty poses a danger to economic stability. These realities have had a disproportionately negative impact on those whose economic situations were already precarious, such as women, persons with disabilities and older persons.[10]

30. International responses have so far proven insufficient to stem the causes and consequences of global economic challenges. Austerity measures taken in the absence of human rights standards are said to have compounded the harms of economic crises by encouraging States to privatize social protection programmes and, consequently, the enjoyment of economic and social rights by the poorest. Classical approaches to international investment and development have been scrutinized for promoting economic growth without due regard for equity and human rights. Whereas there have been positive developments in the policy of the international financial institutions, such as through reform of environmental and social safeguards and the embracing of the Sustainable Development Goals as guiding objectives, as mentioned above there is nevertheless still room to improve participation and representation in multilateral institutions. Moreover, civil society organizations poised to comment on financial policy have faced obstacles to organizing, technical and capacity limitations or outright intimidation and reprisals.

31. The Independent Expert would welcome suggestions on how the international community could better respond to these challenges in a way that promotes a world order that is more democratic and equitable.

[10] OHCHR, *Report on Austerity Measures and Economic and Social Rights* (Geneva, 2013), pp. 7–9.

F. Youth facing fragility, violence and opportunity

32. Fragile contexts impede the enjoyment of fundamental human rights by the society and threaten democratic institutions and processes. Youth,[11] in particular, face unique challenges and are especially vulnerable in uncertain environments. This is particularly the case because of the social construction of the transition between childhood and adulthood in which young people are made to bear the responsibilities of adulthood despite marginalization by society and restricted autonomy. For example, economic self-sufficiency is generally recognized as an important marker in the transition to adulthood. However, limited access to resources, education, training, employment and a lack of economic opportunities constrain youth's prospects.[12] In extreme situations, a lack of opportunity may push young people to find alternative and sometimes illegal means to secure finances.

33. Despite accounting for one out of every six people worldwide,[13] youth are severely underrepresented in national and international governing bodies. Age limits that prevent voting and running for office can disenfranchise young people at the national level, as can the lack of formal, dedicated structures to ensure youth participation in decision-making.[14] The space for youth participation in multilateral settings is particularly limited, raising the question of how responsive those forums are to the concerns of young people and future generations.

34. In addition, when States fail to provide an equal space for the economic empowerment of all, youth are particularly affected. Challenges to accessing quality and market-appropriate education affect the human development and economic prospects of young people. The paucity of paid occupational opportunities, whether they be entry-level employment positions, on-the-job training or apprenticeships, has long-term effects on the economic outcomes and political influence of young people.[15] Moreover, the fact that young people may legally be paid according to pay scales that differ from those of older adults can result in their exploitation.[16] For young women, issues such as lower employment rates, limited access to education and socially imposed constrictions reduce their economic and political power.[17] In contexts where the distribution of resources is skewed against them, youth may lose faith in the ability of democratic processes to restore economic equity. In some cases, this has led to youth becoming susceptible to recruitment by criminal gangs, separatist movements and terrorist organizations and has inadvertently made the State a common "object of aggression".

35. The mandate holder would like to seek expert opinions and interrogate the nexus between youth, fragility, violence and opportunity.

IV. Methodology

36. The Independent Expert will adopt several working methods to execute his mandate. These include, but are not limited to, thematic studies, expert consultations, country visits, participation in international forums, issuance of communications and cooperation with other mandate holders.

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[11] Following the General Assembly definition, "youth" is defined as individuals aged between 15 and 24. See, for example, resolution 56/117, para. 15 and resolution 62/126, para. 25.

[12] United Nations, "Youth population trends and sustainable development", Population Facts, May 2015, p. 1; and OHCHR, "Expert meeting on the human rights of youth: executive summary and outcomes", 18 September 2013.

[13] United Nations, Population Facts, May 2015.

[14] See European Youth Forum, "Human Rights Council resolution 35/14: OHCHR study on youth and human rights", p. 3.

[15] Ibid., p. 4.

[16] OHCHR, "Expert meeting on the human rights of youth", p. 2.

[17] Ibid., p. 3.

A. Thematic studies

37. The Independent Expert will first undertake thematic studies, drawing from the topics discussed above. In the annual reports that he will produce as a result of these thematic studies he will summarize his findings on particular subjects and provide guidance and recommendations to Member States, intergovernmental agencies, civil society, private sector actors and other stakeholders.

38. Follow-up reports on these thematic studies may be submitted to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly as deemed appropriate.

B. Expert consultations

39. The Independent Expert will convene expert meetings and consultations, bringing together participants from academia, civil society, the private sector and international organizations to interrogate the selected themes further. These consultations will aid the mandate holder in identifying obstacles or best practices on selected themes. The recommendations arising from such meetings will further inform the regular reports.

C. Country visits

40. The Independent Expert also plans to undertake country visits to examine obstacles to, and best practices in, the promotion and protection of a democratic and equitable international order in more depth. The Independent Expert wishes to thank those countries that have extended standing invitations to mandate holders, and he intends to make additional requests for visit invitations in order to further explore, within particular country contexts, the themes elaborated above. In anticipation of carrying out country visits, the Independent Expert will develop a methodology applicable to the mandate that defines the scope of inquiry for the visits. During such visits, the mandate holder will seek to gather information on action by Governments in promoting democratic governance, including government priorities and any steps taken to implement treaty obligations, and to identify both obstacles and good practices. The Independent Expert will also hold meetings with a range of stakeholders, including government authorities of the countries in question, national human rights institutions, civil society and the private sector.

D. Participation in international forums

41. Aware that in its resolution 18/6 the Human Rights Council urged all stakeholders — including States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions, other special procedures and all relevant actors — to cooperate with the mandate holder in the discharge of his mandate, the Independent Expert will seek collaboration and enhance dialogue across the board.

42. The Independent Expert is keen to participate in international forums to raise awareness concerning the importance of promoting and protecting a democratic and equitable international order. In such forums, the mandate holder will contribute to discussions on a democratic and equitable international order that may be carried out by national and regional institutions; the Bretton Woods institutions; regional groupings such as the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of American States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; other intergovernmental groupings such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Community of Democracies; civil society organizations such as the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum; United Nations agencies; the private sector; and academia.

43. Engaging in dialogue with other stakeholders contributes to better understanding of the mandate and the normative framework and can trigger global consensus on issues raised.

E. Communication and cooperation with other mandate holders

44. The Independent Expert recognizes that the scope of the mandate incorporates a wide range of human rights issues and concerns. While the interlinking of all human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, gives the Independent Expert wide latitude, he is mindful of the need to cooperate with other mandate holders in executing his mandate and connecting it to others. In this regard, themes addressed above may be pursued in consultation with special procedure mandate holders working on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, freedom of opinion and expression, the situation of human rights defenders, violence and discrimination against women, the right to development, foreign debt, extreme poverty, international solidarity and the human rights impact of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, among others.

45. In addition, the Independent Expert envisages the possibility of developing, as appropriate, a series of joint actions with other mandate holders, including issuing joint communications and undertaking joint country visits where there are intersecting interest areas in a particular country, individual cases of common concern, violations of human rights that implicate democratic principles or equity, or reprisals.

V. Conclusion

46. **In the present report the Independent Expert presents the vision and priorities which he wishes to share with Member States and other stakeholders regarding the way in which he intends to execute the mandate, all the while working in a spirit of openness, frankness and transparency.**

47. **The mandate requires a holistic approach, ensuring that all rights are promoted and protected in an environment that gives due recognition to issues of participation, inclusion and transparency.**

48. **The Independent Expert intends to work closely with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and private sector actors, to create a better understanding of the need to promote a democratic and equitable international order. In addition, he looks forward to consulting with a broad range of civil society organizations to further increase knowledge of, and engagement with, the mandate.**

49. **It is the desire of the Independent Expert to document his findings and any difficulties encountered and lessons learned, sharing these lessons with the Council and all relevant stakeholders.**